

Physical Activity Resources

Walking School Bus



What is a Walking School Bus?

A “Walking Bus” lets a group, or “bus,” of children walk from home to school each morning quickly and safely under the guidance of trained adult supervisors. Each walking bus has an adult “driver” at the front and an adult “conductor” bringing up the rear. The children walk to school in a group along a set route picking up additional ‘passengers’ at specific “bus-stops” along the way.

As with a regular school bus, the Walking School Bus runs rain or shine. Everyone should wear a reflective jacket or bright clothing. Along the way children can chat to their friends, learn valuable road safety skills, and gain some independence.

All walking buses are different! They vary to suit the needs of the children and their parents. Some schools have a number of walking buses and some only have one walking bus. Some walking buses operate only on certain days; other walking buses operate only in morning or afternoon.

A Walking School Bus is a perfect fit with the government's aim to reduce road traffic congestion and provide safe walking routes. A Walking Bus deserves our support because it's beneficial in so many ways; not only does it take pressure off parents in the morning, but it also provides children with a healthy, educational, and environmentally sound way of getting to school each day.

A Walking School Bus Makes Life Better.

For starters traffic is reduced in the morning. It is estimated that 20-25 percent of morning traffic can be attributed to parents taking their children to school. Anyone driving at around 9:00 a.m. during the school holidays will have found the roads relatively car free.

A Walking School Bus will also take pressure off parents' mornings. Knowing that the kids are safely on their way to school - and that they'll arrive on time - means that parents and guardians can concentrate on getting to work, or can relax and enjoy breakfast and a bit of peace and quiet.

A Walking School Bus is also good for children. For a start, walking is great exercise - it helps to build up muscles including the heart as well as building bone density and improving all around health. In addition, it allows children to learn road sense - making them wiser and safer when the time comes for them to deal with traffic on their own.

Research has shown that walking to school in the morning is great preparation for the day ahead. Kids arrive awake, alert and ready to learn!

5 Steps to Setting-up a Walking School Bus in Your Neighborhood.

Step 1 - Have a chat with your children. See if they like the idea and would like to walk to school with their friends each morning.

Step 2 - Talk to other parents at the school, a walking bus typically consists of between 15-20 children and will need a pool of 6-10 parents to supervise the buses. Find out if they are interested and if there are any viable routes for the Walking Bus to take each morning.

Step 3 - When you think you have enough support, speak to your school. See if they like the idea, and can work with the parents who would like to get involved with the project.

Step 4 - Ask the school for the Safe Routes to School or SNAP Plan. They should have one in place. It should be used for the walking school bus.

Step 5 - And, of course, make sure your children get on the bus when it launches.